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ABSTRACT

This 11-section report focuses on examples of community-based collaborative efforts in Michigan which address the needs of children and youth in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Section One provides an introduction to the report. Section Two looks at the status of Michigan's children, youth, and families, and includes a summary of sociodemographic trends. Section Three provides a framework for understanding and action, describing community collaborations as applications of ecological theory. This section also introduces a research project initiated in 1991 designed to find out to what extent communities might be applying this ecological model to address the needs of children, youth, and families. Section Four describes the method of analysis used in the project; Section Five presents an overview of 45 collaborative efforts in Michigan identified through the project's preliminary survey; and Section Six gives an in-depth view of 13 of these collaborations. Section Seven focuses on some of the challenges for collaborations identified by the project, Section Eight considers common elements among collaborations, and Section Nine looks at unique elements of the collaborations. Section Ten discusses implications for community collaborations and Section Eleven focuses on the current status and future outlook for collaborative efforts. Twelve figures and seven tables supplement the text. Contains 46 references. (NB)

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RESEARCH REPORT

Michigan State University
Agricultural Experiment Station
East Lansing

Community Coalitions in Action

Building and Maintaining Community Coalitions on Behalf of Children, Youth and Families

CG024922

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January 1993 ■ Research Report 529

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Building and Maintaining Community Coalitions

on Behalf of Children, Youth and Families

Project Report
Community Coalitions in Action
Institute for Children, Youth, and Families

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Section 1

The Vision

In recent decades the world has undergone dramatic social, demographic and economic changes that have deeply affected the lives of Michigan's children, youth and families. For too many children and youth the consequences have been highly undesirable. How well Michigan citizens, institutions and communities respond to the challenges presented by these changes heavily impacts the social and economic fabric of this state for the present and the future.

Creating caring communities and expanding the safety net for children through collaborative community efforts are recommended repeatedly as constructive responses to improve the present status and future well-being of children, youth and their families (National Commission on Children, 1991; Dryfoos, 1990; Hodgkinson, 1989; W.T. Grant Foundation, 1988; Schorr, 1988). Although community-based collaborative efforts on behalf of children, youth and families have existed for a long time, recent community efforts address 1990s circumstances in a variety of ways.

This report will document examples of collaborative efforts in Michigan which address the needs of children and youth in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Report Outline

1. A broad overview of current data concerning the status of children/youth in Michigan;
2. A framework for understanding the role of collaborative efforts on behalf of children, youth and families;
3. Findings from an exploratory study documenting several types of collaborations that have been established on behalf of children, youth and their families;
4. Implications for collaborative efforts.

Definition of a Coalition or Collaboration

A coalition or a collaboration is broadly defined as an effort that unites and empowers individuals and organizations to accomplish collectively what they could not accomplish independently (Kagan and Rivera, 1991).

Section

2

The Need: Status of Michigan's Children, Youth and Families

Demographic data and general societal trends provide important indicators of the status and future of Michigan's children, youth and families. Seven trends which are particularly significant in the lives of Michigan's population of young people are outlined below.

Seven General Demographic Trends
1. Youth are a declining percentage of the state's population.
2. Geographic distribution of Michigan's youth is predominantly metropolitan.
3. Ethnic diversity among youth is increasing.
4. Diversity of living arrangements is increasing.
5. Employment of adults outside the home is increasing.
6. Economic shifts for children and youth are occurring.
7. Availability of and exposure to technologies are increasing.

1. Youth Are a Declining Percentage of State's Population

Michigan youth under 18 years of age number 2.5 million (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1990). These children and youth under 18 make up 26.5 percent of the state's population, down from 37.8 percent in 1960. The under-18 population living in Michigan reached its highest number during the years surrounding the 1970 census (see Table 1). Conversely, the number of people age 65 or older has increased from 8.2 percent to 11.9 percent since 1960 and will continue to rise as the baby boomers reach retirement age. One reason for the declining number of youth is that American women are having fewer children, about 40 percent less since 1960. Moreover, the number of American women in the prime child-bearing age is expected to drop 11 percent during the 1990s (Francese, 1990).

Table 1. 50 Years of Youth Demographics for Michigan (in thousands).						
Michigan Demographics	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990
Total Population	5256	6284	7823	8875	9262	9295
Total Population <18 years of age	1599	1913	2959	3253	2751	2459
Percent of Population < 18 yrs.	30.4%	30.4%	37.8%	36.7%	29.7%	26.5%
Working Age Population (18-65 yrs.)	3326	3909	4226	4873	5599	5728
Mature Adults (65+)	6.3%	7.4%	8.2%	8.4%	9.8%	11.9%
Youth Dependency Ratio (1)	48	49	70	67	49	43
Total Dependency Ratio (2)	58	61	85	82	65	63

(1) Number of youth under 18 years of age for every 100 adults 18-65 years of ages.

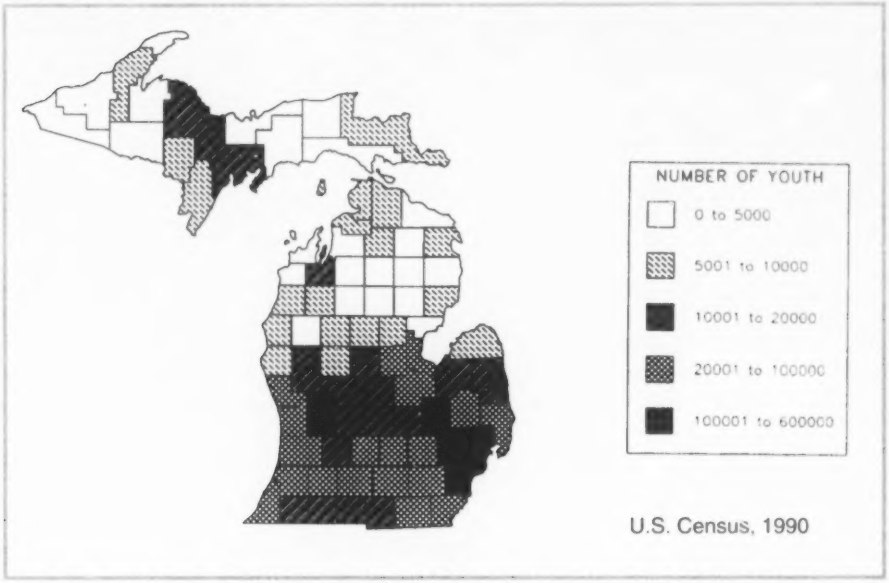
(2) Youth under 18 + adults over 65, for every 100 adults 18-65 years of age.

2. Geographic Distribution of Michigan's Youth

Michigan's youth live in every county, but predominantly in counties with metropolitan areas. In fact over 50 percent live in five counties—four in southeast Michigan (Wayne, Oakland, Macomb and Genesee) and one, Kent, in western Michigan (see Figure 1).

Section 2

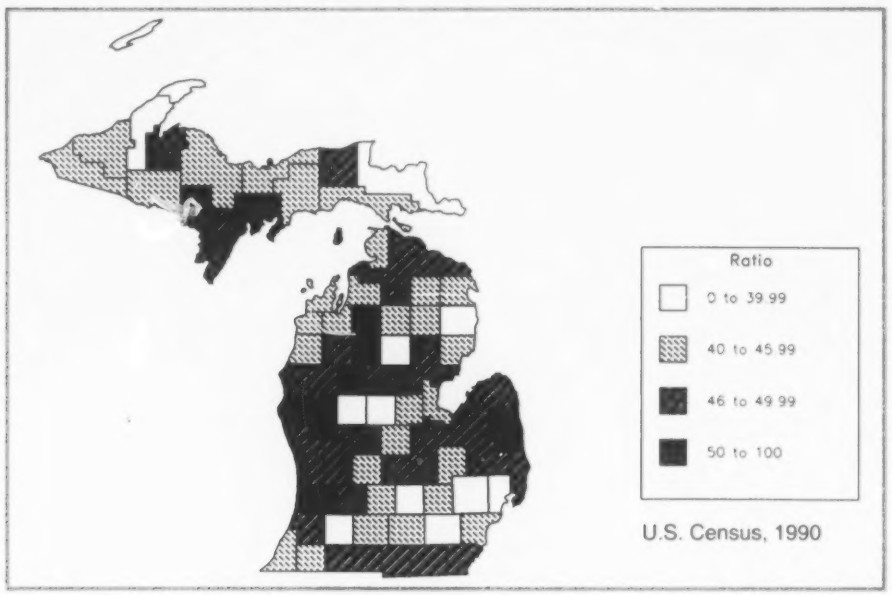
Figure 1: Map of Distribution of Michigan's Population Under 18 Years Of Age (1990) By County



The youth dependency ratio or the number of youth for each 100 persons of working age is another measure of where Michigan youth live and the economic burden carried by those who work. As a nation the youth dependency ratio is decreasing because of the declining number of youth. The total dependency ratio will increase in the future, however, because fewer young adults will enter the working age and an increasing number of adults will enter retirement age. In Michigan the ratio of youth to working-age adults varies from county to county, ranging from 33 to 54. The state average is 43 youth under 18 years for every 100 working-age adults (see Figure 2).

Table 1 gives an indication of how this ratio has changed in the last 50 years. In economic terms, these statistics suggest that there are fewer children and youth, and more adults, available to support the needs of youth in Michigan. At the same time there are more people of retirement age; to the extent that they need economic support, fewer resources would be available for children and youth.

Figure 2: Map of Ratio of Michigan Youth Under 18 years of Age to 100 Working Age Adults (18-65 yrs) by County

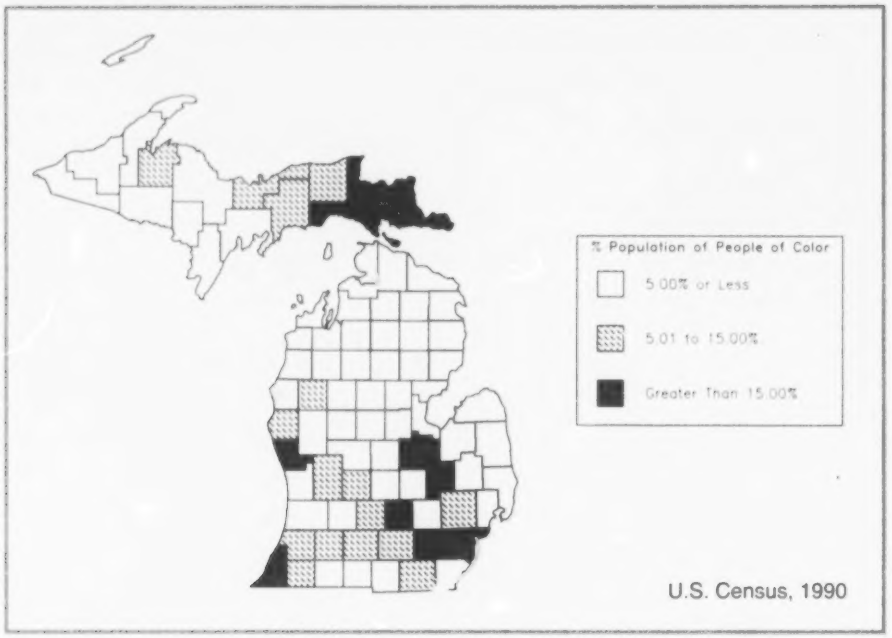


3. Increasing Ethnic Diversity Among Youth

Ethnic and racial diversity is increasing, and a greater proportion of younger Americans will be people of color (Francese, 1990). Michigan ranks seventh in numbers of citizens who may be considered people of color (i.e., Blacks, Hispanics, Asian-Americans, Native Americans and others). This represents 16.7 percent of the total Michigan population, an increase of 11.4 percent compared to less than a 1 percent increase in the total population since 1980 (*American Demographics*, 1991). People of color are not equally distributed across the counties in Michigan, as is illustrated in Figure 3.

Minority families tend to be younger and are more likely to have dependent children. Twenty-one percent of Michigan's children are from ethnically diverse backgrounds. African-Americans comprise 16 percent of the children under 18 in Michigan, Hispanics 2.5 percent, Native American less than 1 percent, and other ethnic groups (i.e., Asian-Americans) about 2 percent (*Kids Count*, 1992).

Figure 3: Map of Ethnic Diversity by County (1990)



4. Increasing Diversity of Living Arrangements

The diversity of Michigan can also be witnessed in the greater variety of living arrangements. Fewer households have children under 18 years of age. The percent of households with children under 18 which includes either two parents (27 percent) or a single parent (10 percent) has declined from 47 percent in 1970 to 37 percent in 1990. Households without children under 18 years equal 63 percent of the households, 28.4 are comprised of younger or older married couples who do not have children under 18 years, 28.7 percent of households are young or old single persons or unrelated individuals, and 5.8 percent of the households are family-related individuals without children under 18.

A declining percentage of households with children are two-parent families. In 1970, married couples with children under 18 accounted for 44 percent of the households in the U.S.; in 1990 they accounted for 27 percent and their number is expected to continue to decline (Francese, 1990). The divorce rate soared following World War II and then dropped dramatically. Recently it has climbed back to the high rates following the war. America's divorce rate is one of the highest in the world. The increase in single-parent households is further illustrated by the increasing number of children born out of wedlock. Before American

children reach 18, 50 to 60 percent live in a home where parents divorced or were never married.

Two concurrent but countervailing trends increase the diversity of children's lives: the long-cycle family—children born when the parents are above the median age for birth of first child; and the short-cycle family—children born to young women in their early or middle teens.

5. Employment of Adults Outside the Home

Major changes have occurred in America's work life in the past two decades, as women with children have entered the work force in large numbers and the amount of time at work has increased. The proportion of all women working outside the home with children younger than 18 has increased from 40 to 65 percent since 1970 (Children's Defense Fund, 1991). Many mothers work because they must in order for their families to afford the basic necessities. In addition, the traditional entry-level workers, white males, will be outnumbered by women and minorities entering the labor force in the 1990s. Other factors that have created a major change in families are the rise in the number of working hours, commuting time and the decline in days off. Americans are spending 158 hours more each year (or an extra month) at work than they did in 1969 (Schor & Leete-Guy, 1991). In general, the presence of adults in the lives of children has changed, with parents and children spending less time together at home than in the past (National Commission on Children, 1991).

6. Economic Shifts for Children and Youth

In 1990 a total of 460,000 Michigan children, or 18.6 percent, lived below the poverty line. Moreover, the child poverty rate remains higher than for any year since the mid-sixties (*Kids Count*, 1992). In addition, 41 percent of all poor children were in families with incomes in the lower half of the poverty line, compared with 34 percent in 1978. A family of three in such desperate poverty had to cover all living necessities with $412 per month (based on the 1989 federal poverty line; Children's Defense Fund, 1991).

The size of the family is another measure of economic responsibility. Many women who choose to have children are having them later in their reproductive years and having fewer of them. One reason for the decline in the number of children that women are having is women's greater involvement with their careers. Another reason, however, which cannot be overlooked, is the cost involved in raising a child. For a two-parent

family that earns under $29,900, it is estimated to cost $86,000 to raise a child from 0 to 18 in the United States (United States Department of Agriculture, 1990).

7. Increasing availability of and exposure to technologies

Much has been written and debated about the influence of increasing technology, especially television and movies, on our children and youth. The impact of today's technology on children's senses is very different than the print or auditory media stimulation of earlier generations.

8. Summary of trends

The trends outlined demonstrate that significant change has occurred for Michigan's children, youth and families over the last several decades. Social, economic, and technological changes since the late 1940s have created a fragmentation of community life. As a result the naturally occurring networks and linkages among individuals, families, schools, and other social systems within a community that traditionally have provided the protection for children, youth and families are often non-existent. Therefore, the "social capital," that is, the social supports and opportunities for participation and involvement necessary for healthy human development, is deficient for too many children (Comer, 1984; Coleman, 1987).

In trying to understand what this means in the daily lives of children, it is a mistake to attribute single causality. Numbers cannot provide a qualitative picture, but cumulatively they create a different picture of childhood in the 1990s as compared to a generation or two in the past. It seems safe to assume that today's children and youth, the adults of the first decades of the 21st century, are having a very different life course than their parents and grandparents and all preceding generations—it is an era of unprecedented change and uncertainty.

Many, if not most, of the children and youth in Michigan have adjusted to these changes and are doing well with experiences and skills unheard of a generation ago. Computer experts, sophisticated travelers, environmental advocates, and competent leaders are but a few of the abilities seen in many Michigan children.

While for these children and youth it may be the best of times, concurrently it can be argued that for others it is the worst of times. The probable outcomes for growing numbers are less than optimal unless

concerted efforts bring about change. A wide variety of indicators suggest that a substantial percentage of today's children, youth and families are in jeopardy and turmoil, putting them at high risk for not becoming productive adult citizens. Furthermore, the gap between the "haves" and the "have nots," between those with rich experiences and those with impoverished experiences, the achievers and the non-achievers, is growing with the shrinking of the middle class (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1991; Keith & McPherson, 1989).

9. Children, Youth, and Families and Risk

Disturbing statistics reveal that poverty, poor health and nutrition, child neglect and abuse, teenage pregnancy, substance abuse, depression and suicide among young people are dangerously high (Cooperative Extension Service Youth-at-Risk Report, 1988; Simons, Finlay & Yany, 1991; Dryfoos, 1990; Fuchs & Reklis, 1992). Michigan ranked 37th on a cumulative measure of children's well-being, with nine of eleven indicators suggesting worsening conditions for Michigan's children (*Kids Count Data Book,* 1992). To illustrate the effects of high-risk behaviors, Dryfoos (1990) examined various national data sets of four major issues: unprotected intercourse (teen pregnancy); cigarette, alcohol or drug abuse; delinquency/violence; educational dropouts (two or more years behind grade level). She concluded that one-tenth of America's 10-17 year olds have experienced three or more of the above high-risk behaviors and an additional 15 percent have experienced two of the behaviors. Moreover, teenage fertility is very high compared to other developed countries and being a teen parent is closely related to poverty (National Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families, 1990). In addition, increasing numbers of antisocial and self-defeating behaviors of youth are occurring at earlier ages (Keith & Nelson, 1990).

Risk factors encountered by children, youth and families are not just a phenomenon of the inner cities. In 1986 (for the first time since 1975), non-metro poverty rates exceeded the poverty rates in U.S. central cities (Census, 1989). Of the ten counties in Michigan with the highest percentage of their total population receiving regular cash assistance, seven are rural counties in the Lower Peninsula. The other three counties are metropolitan areas (Michigan Department of Social Services, 1990; Michigan League for Human Services, 1991).

Section

3

A Framework for Understanding and Action

A clearer understanding of child/youth development and factors that dramatically increase the likelihood of successful growth to adulthood is evolving, and can be termed the ecology of youth development. Ecological thinking recognizes the individual and the interconnectedness among, between and within human systems. The human family, like the individual, is embedded or infused in multiple systems of interrelated environments in dynamic associations. The quality of life of humans and the environment is interdependent and neither can be considered in isolation (Andrews, Bubolz, 1980; Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Lerner, 1984, 1986; Garbarino, 1990; Paolucci, 1966; Bubolz and Sontag, 1989, 1991).

An ecological perspective emphasizes that the community is one major unit of analysis. An African proverb states that it takes a whole village to educate a child. More accurately it can be said that "For good and/or for ill, the whole village does educate the child" (Keith, 1991). To an ecologist, the question "Where do you live?" means not only an answer of geographic location, but the community and the context of that community. In an earlier era, communities were less complex and value systems were more congruent with family values. Most parents could make the assumption that if their children walked through the community they would be safe; many adults were community monitors who knew about the children of the "village." Due to many factors, some of which we have previously discussed, there has been a gradual destruction of naturally occurring social networks in the community (Benard, 1991).

In contrast, an insightful observation for the 1990s is aptly expressed in the W. T. Grant Foundation report, *The Forgotten Half* (1988):

> Responsive communities, along with good schools and strong families, form a triad that supports youth in their passage to work and adult life. Our country has always held that good families create good communities. Now we also need to work on the reverse—that good communities help build strong families in the interests of youth. (p. 49)

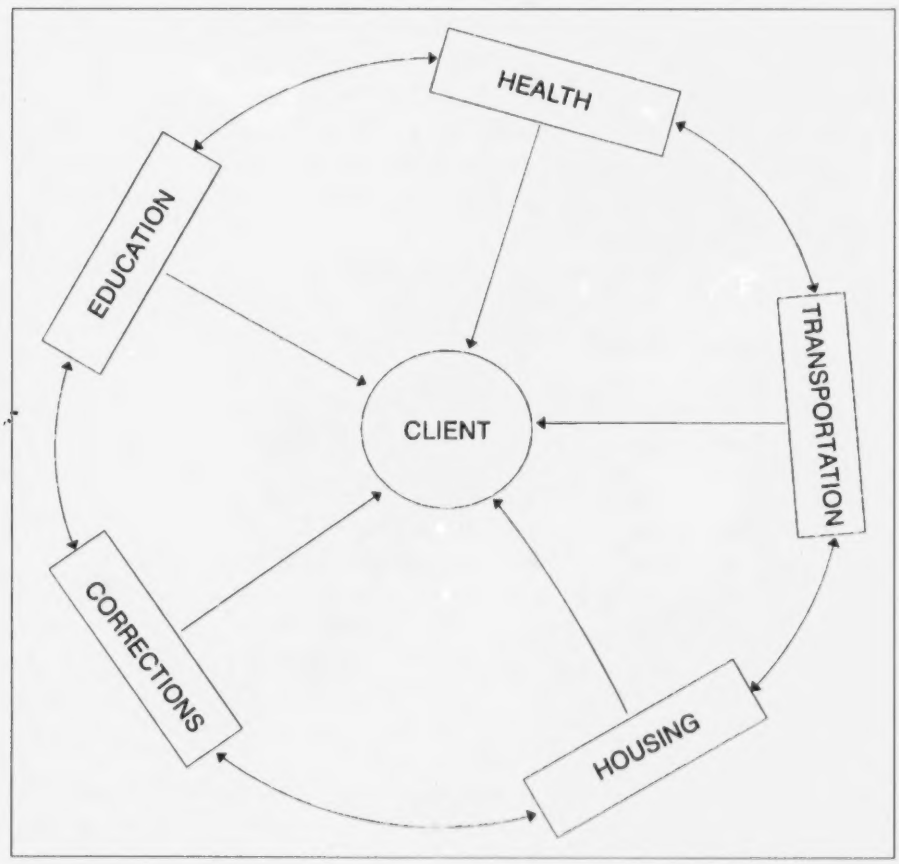
1. Community Collaborations as Applications of Ecological Theory

At the community level, this ecological model has been articulated by Hodgkinson in relation to community services being offered to clients. In Hodgkinson's (1989) interdependency model (Figure 4), the client is the main focus of service organizations, and there is reciprocal interaction among service organizations. Thus, service providers form coalitions to begin communicating with each other. However, from a human ecological

perspective, Hodgkinson omitted several important aspects of the "client's" system. The role that each client—be it family or child— has to contribute to the process suggests that the arrows point in both directions. Interaction between the family or child and the service organizations empowers the individual and allows him or her to be a producer of his/her own development (Lerner, 1981, 1982). Secondly, Hodgkinson has omitted in his model the voluntary sector such as religious institutions, youth-serving organizations, child care and service clubs. He has also excluded the role of important indirect influences such as industry, business and media.

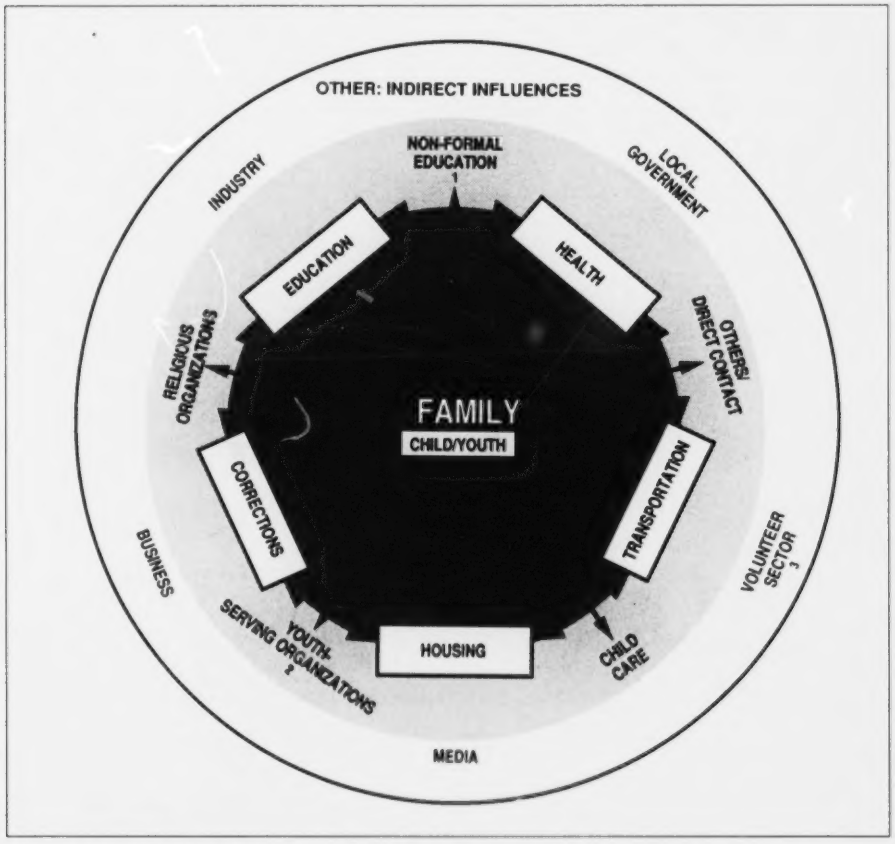
In contrast, a comprehensive ecological model (Figure 5) demonstrates

Figure 4: Hodgkinson's Model of Collaboration



the interaction of clients (be they families or individuals) and a variety of service organizations. This model provides the theoretical basis for this study. Communities which want to respond to children in a manner more likely to succeed will be those who consider collaborative efforts, including as many dimensions of the community as feasible, presented in Figure 5. **Thus, a coalition or collaborative effort is an ecological approach to problem solving.** The focus would be one of prevention—of expanding the safety net for children, youth and their families.

Figure 5: Collaboration on Behalf of Children, Youth and Families in Socioeconomic and Cultural Contexts



1 e.g., University Extension - 4-H, Home Economics, Community Development
2 e.g., 4-H, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, YMCA, YWCA
3 e.g., United Way; Service Clubs, e.g. Rotary, Kiwanis, Optimists

2. Research Project

At Michigan State University, a research project was initiated in 1991 to understand to what extent communities might be applying this model to address the needs of children, youth and families. Exploratory research questions about the process and characteristics of community coalitions were formulated. The following questions were addressed:

Research Questions	
1.	What are different types of community coalitions that have formed on behalf of children, youth and families?
2.	What are the common steps of development for community coalitions?
3.	What are the characteristics of effective community coalitions?
4.	Who are the people involved in the community coalitions?
5.	Do the community coalitions have any clients (i.e., children, youth and/or families) involved in the decision-making part of the coalitions?
6.	What characteristics of community coalitions seem to inhibit effectiveness?
7.	What are the kinds of issues or concerns that these community coalitions are addressing?
8.	What types of needs assessment do community coalitions conduct, and how does the needs assessment affect the focus of the coalition?

Section

4

The Method of Analysis

In order to address these specific research questions, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. These included pilot site visits, a survey questionnaire, phone interviews, and in-depth interviews. Over 100 coalitions were identified through a brief survey. From this sample, telephone interviews were conducted with contact persons from 35 coalitions. Based upon variability in geographic location, economic status and organizing frameworks, 13 site visits were made to gather and analyze both quantitative and qualitative data. Qualitative data analysis was conducted on the interviews using ETHNOGRAPH. A search/cluster process was used to formulate an analysis and highlight major variables.

In addition to the interviews, simple checklist questionnaires were given to key members of the coalitions. These checklists identify certain key variables that were important or necessary to the collaborative effort. The remainder of this report will summarize the findings from this exploratory study.

Collecting Quantitative and Qualitative Data

STEP 1.	Exploratory Observations
Method:	Identified through two site visits and a brief survey.
STEP 2.	Survey
Method:	Identified 116 coalitions; gathered more extensive information on 45 coalitions.
Step 3.	Telephone Interviews
Method:	Structured telephone interviews with a coalition member.
Step 4.	Site Visits
Method:	Formal structure interviews with three or more members of a coalition, who also completed checklists about their coalition.

Section

5

An Overview of Collaborative Efforts in Michigan: Results of the Preliminary Survey

Sixty-seven Michigan counties responded to a request to identify coalitions in their county focusing upon the needs of children, youth and families. Forty-six counties reported information about coalitions in Michigan, and 21 reported no known coalitions within their counties.

1. Focus and Nature of Coalitions Identified through Survey

The respondents named a total of 116 coalitions. General categories identifying the content focus of the coalitions included: Agency/Organization Collaboration with General Focus on Children and Youth, Building Futures/Life Skills, Child Abuse/Neglect, Educational, Parent/Family Centers, Health/Safety Issues, Recreational, Single Issues, Youth-at-Risk, Neighborhood Watch.

The respondents answered additional questions concerning one of the coalitions which in their opinion was having the strongest impact upon the community. For these 45 collaborative efforts, the two most frequently chosen types of coalitions were agency/organization collaborations with general focus identified (26.7%), and coalitions whose main focus was the prevention and intervention of child abuse and neglect (24.4%). See Table 2 for the listing of general categories of the 116 and the 45 chosen coalitions.

Section 5

Table 2. A Comparison Between the Focus and Nature of All Identified Coalitions and the 45 Coalitions Selected as Having the Greatest Impact Upon Children, Youth and Families.

Focus/Nature	All Identified Coalitions Frequency	Percent	45 Coalitions Frequency	Percent
Agency/Organization Collaboration With General Focus On Children/Youth	27	23.3	12	26.73
Child Abuse/Neglect	15	12.9	11	24.4
Parent/Family Center	12	10.3	2	4.4
Youth-at-Risk	12	10.3	4	8.9
Building Futures/ Life Skills	11	9.5	4	8.9
Education Through the Schools	10	8.6	3	6.7
Health/Safety Issues (i.e. Substance Abuse)	10	8.6	4	8.9
Single Issue (i.e., Teenage Pregnancy)	7	6.0	1	2.2
Neighborhood Watch	6	5.2	3	6.7
Recreational (i.e., sports)	3	2.6	1	2.2
Unclassified	3	2.6	0	0.0
TOTAL	116	100	45	100

2. Programming and Services Provided by the 45 Coalitions

The coalitions provided direct services to a variety of people. Eighty-seven percent of the coalitions were presently serving youth (age 13-18) in their communities with some type of programming. In addition, 78 percent of the coalitions were providing services and programs for family units (i.e., children age 0-12 and parents), while 76 percent were providing services to parents through parent education programs.

3. Groups and Agencies Involved in the 45 Coalitions

The specific groups and agencies or organizations that were members of the coalitions included 11 general categories: schools, community service organizations, government, health, law, agency, business, parents/families, youth services, Michigan State University Extension, and other coalitions. The open-ended responses did not mention the role of religious institutions. However, during the in-depth interviews, religious institutions were identified as major supports involved in coalitions. Table 3 lists organizations/agencies.

Table 3. Organizations/Agencies Working with Coalitions.

General Category	Frequency	Percent
Schools	40	86.9
Community Service Organizations	26	56.5
Government	22	47.8
Health	17	36.9
Law	13	28.2
Agency	11	23.9
Business	8	17.3
Parents/Families	7	15.2
Youth Services	6	13.0
Extension	4	8.6
Other Coalitions	4	8.6

Section

5

4. Development and Maintenance of Coalitions

Almost 76 percent of coalitions began because of general concerns about the risk factors facing children, youth and families. Prevention of child abuse/neglect and intervention services to families were also strong reasons (62.2%) in the formation of coalitions. A few respondents answered that the coalition began because the development was mandated by a grant (17.7%) or some type of policy due to a crisis event (11.1%).

Interestingly, most coalitions identified as having greatest impact have been recently formed. Fifty-one percent of the coalitions examined began since 1989. The earliest coalitions in this study were formed in the late 1970s, with a focus on the prevention of child abuse/neglect and intervention services to these families. It seems probable that those earliest formed coalitions have remained in place because of their incorporation within a specific agency and a clear mandate to work collaboratively. Also, there has been to some degree a consistency in funding related to the mandate, reducing the continuing need to acquire base support.

Several possible explanations exist for the high percent of recently formed coalitions: 1) a significant surge in collaborative efforts in recent years may be occurring; 2) selective reporting of the most recently formed coalitions by respondents; 3) collaborative efforts may not have long tenure and those failing or completing goals and disbanding were not reported. See Table 4 for the years in which the coalitions were formed.

Table 4. The Years in Which the Coalitions Began.

Years	Frequencies	Group Percent
1977	1	4.4
1978	1	
1980	2	35.5
1983	3	
1985	3	
1986	2	
1987	3	
1988	3	
1989	12	51.1
1990	11	
Data not available	5	11.1

5. Specific Steps Taken by the Collaborative Efforts

Eleven possible steps that a coalition might go through in its development were listed on the questionnaire. Over 90 percent reported having taken the following actions: conducting one or several meetings; setting up future meeting dates; talking about youth issues and needs; making a commitment to work with other organizations/agencies; sharing information about programming among community organizations; and creating ideas about beginning action. Approximately two-thirds reported developing a proposed plan of action; establishing a priority listing of youth needs; implementing the plan of action; and applying for a grant. Nearly half the coalitions had conducted an evaluation of the plan. However, less than 10 percent of the coalitions had directed a conference or workshop; developed directories of youth services or programs; initiated programming to conduct research; or received a grant (see Table 5).

Table 5. The Specific Steps Taken by the Coalitions.

Steps Taken	Frequencies	Percentages
One or Several Meetings	45	100
Set Up Future Meetings	45	100
Talked About Issues	44	97.7
Commitment to Work	44	97.7
Shared Information	42	93.3
Created Ideas	41	91.1
Develop a Plan of Action	33	73.3
Establish a Priority	29	64.4
Carried Out Plan	28	62.2
Applied for Grant	27	60.0
Evaluation of Plan	22	48.9
Conferences/Workshops	4	8.9
Directories	3	6.7
Conducted Research	3	6.7
Received a Grant	2	4.4

Section

5

6. Summary of the Preliminary Survey

Although the coalitions identified by the short questionnaire are diverse, there are several similar elements that summarize the initial findings from these preliminary surveys. The majority of the coalitions were either agency/organization collaborations or they focused on the issue of child abuse/neglect. Many of the coalitions were recent, with 23 of the 45 formed in the years 1989 and 1990. Although there were different initiators of the coalitions, such as specific person, specific group, specific organization or group of organizations, only a few were initiated by a group of youth. Coalitions formed because of general concerns of youth, or to prevent a specific problem or meet a specific need, outweighed those created by a crisis event or a mandate by a funding agency or policy. Lastly, a majority of the coalitions had completed significant steps in collaborating. A few had even received grants to conduct workshops or research, or had created directories.

Section

6

In-Depth View of 13 Collaborations

The major purpose of the exploratory study was to gain insight into the structure and function of coalitions, to better understand how communities are empowered through the process of developing and maintaining collaborative efforts on behalf of children, youth, and families. The study was also intended to discover common or unique elements in the process of coalition building. The in-depth interviews with active members of 13 coalitions were conducted and provided information about the history and development of the collaborative effort, why and how the collaboration began, the focus of the coalition, community sector contributions, the process used to identify needs, and the nature and function of leadership. Stumbling blocks, failures, and difficulties, as well as accomplishments, were of interest.

The in-depth interviews included open-ended questions and checklists . They began with two or more active members of each coalition cooperatively developing an ecomap by providing names of organizations, businesses, agencies and other social systems directly or indirectly involved with children, youth and families in their community. Figure 6 is an example of the ecomaps which were developed. This activity served as an icebreaker to facilitate involvement of the interview participants and also provided graphic information about the direct and indirect involvement of various community sectors in each coalition.

1. Organizational Framework for Community Collaborations

Coalitions are conglomerates of organizations, groups, and professions (Dluhy, 1990). Empowerment of a community calls for applying the concept of partnerships. Partnerships balance individual and community rights and greatly enhance access to resources (Vlasin, 1991). The organizational structure of the partnership and the types of community sectors involved in collaboration affect access to resources and dictate the resources needed to develop and maintain collaborative efforts. The type of community sector involvement and the structure of the partnership as an organizational system also influence the focus of collaborative efforts and the types of resources exchanged.

Figure 6: Ecomap for Affiliation Group Partnership

Definitions of Organizational Systems
Formal systems are characterized by the existence of a hierarchical structure, explicitly defined roles, and fixed procedures and rules.
Semiformal systems function with some planned procedures and rules but participants have an equal voice in decisions and may change rules and roles.
Informal systems are characterized by functional exchanges between participants arising from needs, desires or personal interests; implicit expectations versus formalized rules; and undefined roles.

For the purposes of this study organizational systems are defined as formal, semiformal, or informal. The following definitions are adapted from Clifford, Bubolz, and Sontag (1992).

In the collaborative effort process, several representatives of agencies from one community sector established partnerships with agencies, organizations and representatives of other community sectors to form conglomerates with unique characteristics and organizational structures. Based on predominant community sector involvement, four types of partnerships were identified:

(1) health and human service agency partnerships

(2) affiliation group partnerships encompassing organizations and volunteers from religious institutions and/or members of ethnic groups

(3) educational partnerships, including schools and businesses

(4) comprehensive community partnerships with citizen input, including agencies and community volunteers.

Illustrative cases for these types of partnerships reveal the history and development of the coalition, the focus of collaborative effort, the organizational structure of the collaborative partnership, and the resources emphasized as important to collaborative efforts.

The term "resources," as used in this study, refers to the classification by Foa and Foa (1973) in their model of resource exchange. According to Foa and Foa there are six classes of resources necessary to account for the basic needs of human beings: information, status, money, goods, services and affectionate regard. In this research, resource exchange was not examined in depth, but we have noted that these resources are integral to the functioning of collaborative partnerships.

Section 6

Each category of collaborative partnerships described below is graphically depicted in Figures 7 through 10. The figures represent the collaborative connections among community sectors and their mutual focus on the needs of children, youth and families. These models are based on information obtained from the ecomap activity (Lauffer, 1982) and in-

Table 6. Codes of the Community Sector	
Code	Community Sector
01	Schools
02	Health and Human Services
03	Government Agencies (e.g., City, County, State)
04	Courts System (e.g., Lawyers, Judges, Law Officers)
05	Private Businesses
06	Funding Agencies (e.g., Foundations, Nonprofit Corporations)
07	Religious Affiliation Groups
08	Media and Public Communications
09	Community Service Clubs (e.g., Kiwanis, Rotary, Optimist)
10	Youth Serving Organizations (e.g., Scouts, 4-H)
11	University Extension
12	Coalitions
13	Ethnic Affiliation Groups
14	Parents
15	High School Youth
16	Middle School Youth (Early Adolescence)
17	Private Practitioners
18	Town Meetings and Forums

depth interviews. The number codes in each represent the types of community sectors directly and indirectly involved in collaborative efforts on behalf of children, youth and families. Table 6 provides an explanation of the codes for the sectors involved in the collaborations.

2. Health and human service agency partnerships

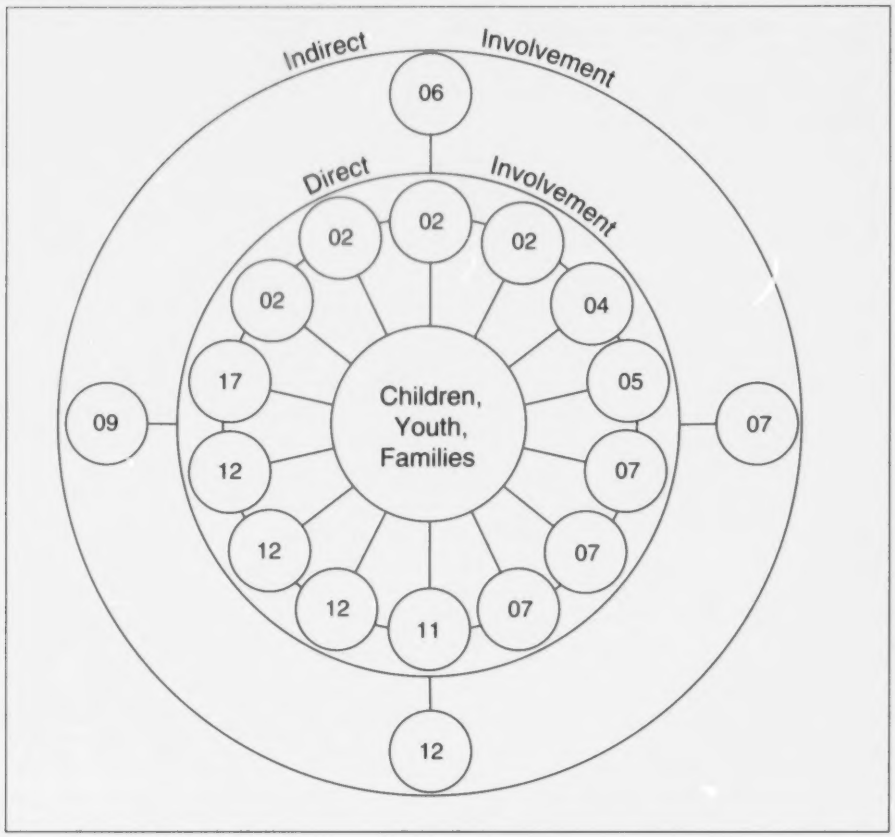
Coalitions in this category most frequently began with an initial informal gathering of a small nucleus of representatives from two to three health and human service agencies. Representatives from the religious institutions, courts, and schools or universities joined forces with health and human service agents to accomplish mutually agreed upon goals. These coalitions tended to focus collaborative efforts on the development of programs aimed at prevention rather than treatment, fostering cooperation among agencies to disseminate information (i.e., parent enrichment) and prevent duplication of direct services.

Although these health and human services partnerships tended to begin as informal systems of resource exchange, they eventually developed a semiformal system framework or a formal system framework, depending upon the general focus of collaboration. When the focus was direct services, the coalition tended to move toward the establishment of a formal system framework. When the purpose was dissemination of information, the tendency was to establish a semiformal system structure to facilitate information exchange among members of the coalition and develop procedures for getting information to the general public.

In their initial informal phase, these health and human service partnerships tended to develop cooperative relationships among members of the coalition, through informal exchange of ideas based on mutually agreed upon needs and goals. A semiformal structure was then established to accomplish goals. Roles and rules began to be developed. The acquisition of financial resources became more critical. Finally a formal organizational structure with specific roles (e.g., administrator, advisory board, program leaders, clients) and rules (e.g., by laws, schedules) was implemented.

The following brief description of Coalition A (see Figure 7) illustrates the evolutionary process for a health and human service agency partnership which began with a focus on the development of prevention programs. Coalition A evolved over a four-year period from a small nucleus of people including representatives from the Department of Social Services, Community Mental Health, Probate Court and a private practitioner. This small group discussed concerns over the money spent on out-of-home placements for children in foster care. They were interested in developing programs that might alleviate the need for foster care placements.

Figure 7: Stylized Example of Health and Human Service Agency Partnership



In the early stages of collaboration, several churches joined the coalition and provided multiple resources leading to the establishment of a resource center. Interview participants who described this coalition agreed, "The churches were the driving force keeping the center open the first year." At first the center operated with very limited funds and a broad spectrum of services provided by many volunteer professionals. Eventually grants were obtained from two funding sources and donations from the churches, enough to pay a part-time program coordinator. Volunteers performed some administrative duties to allow the coordinator time to concentrate on programming and public relations. A program targeting sexual abuse of children was developed. A grant from the Department of Social Services was obtained to finance the program.

The need for financial resources appears to have forced the resource center collaborative partnership to move from an informal, to semiformal, to formal organizational framework. Collaboration began with a few people informally exchanging ideas based on mutually agreed upon needs and goals. A semiformal structure was developed to accomplish goals. Rules and bylaws were established and the need for financial resources increased. As the coalition moved into a formal organizational phase, members of the original collaborative partnership expressed concern that future grants would result in a change in focus from prevention to treatment. This shift in emphasis would require the hiring of licensed professionals and an even tighter organization structure with more distinct roles, less flexible rules, and a narrower range of services.

3. Affiliation group partnerships

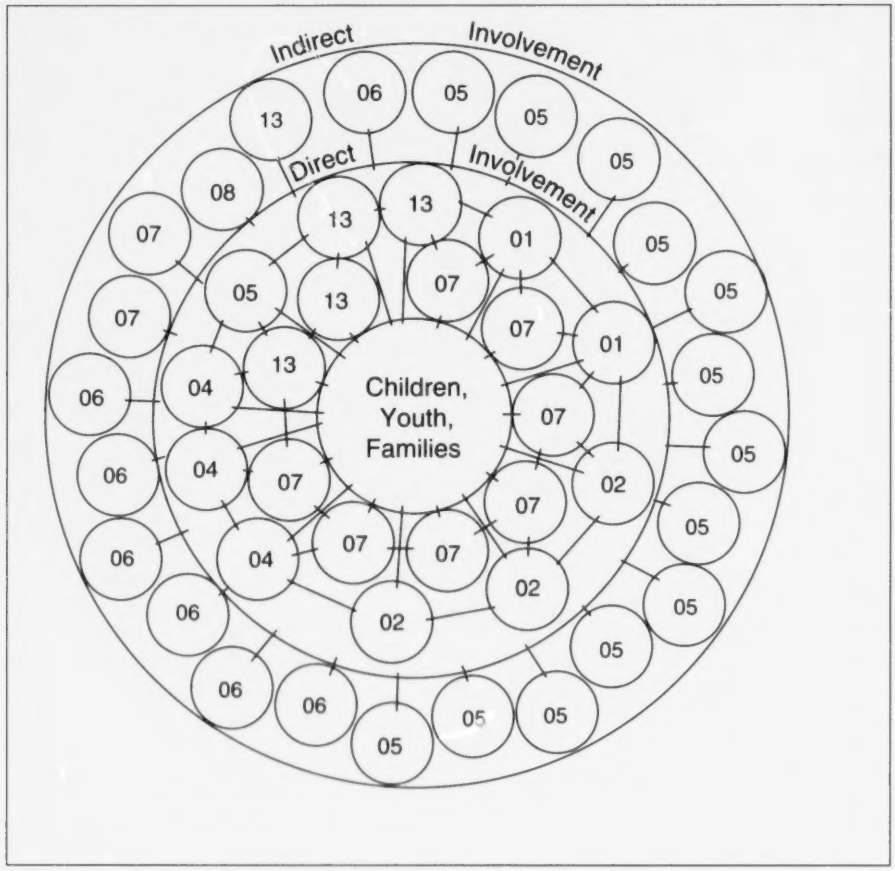
Two coalitions (B and C) from this study fell into the Affiliation Group Partnership Category (see Figure 8). Coalition B is broad-based, encompassing many volunteers from various community sectors who are directly involved with children, youth and families, and many who support the work of the coalition indirectly. This coalition has substantial support from the business sector as well as the support of several funding agencies. As illustrated in Figure 8, religious and ethnic affiliation groups formed the core of the collaborative partnership. They were joined by representatives from the schools, health and human service agencies, the courts, and private businesses.

An interview participant stated that the main purpose of coalition B is "to come together to resolve problems and meet the needs of people in the community, particularly the needs of black children, who are considered to be in crisis. . . . The history of successful programs which are operated by volunteers has shown that negative stereotypes such as black people will not get involved and will not volunteer to provide services are myths."

The key figure in the collaborative partnership is the volunteer coordinator and chairperson of the Advisory Council who spends hours on the telephone each day, keeping in touch with all volunteer coordinators of programs. The chairperson of the Advisory Council works closely with subcommittee chairs.

Coalition B operates as an all inclusive semiformal system with types of resources exchanged both among coalition members and members of the community who serve as volunteers at all levels. Diversity and personal volunteer involvement are key components in the effective functioning of this large, very active affiliation group partnership.

Figure 8: Stylized Example of Affiliation Group Partnership



The purpose of coalition C is to provide Native American people with quality services and to improve their economic, social, psychological, health and employment situation. The coalition began in the 1970s when several sectors of the community joined together to work for recognition as a tribe in the state of Michigan; at the present time the tribe has been recognized for ten years. The broader coalition is organized into three basic sectors: an administrative, an economic development, and a youth advisory sector.

This coalition is classified as an Affiliation Group Partnership because member affiliation with the Native American community is a predominant

factor. Coalition C also has the characteristics of a Health and Human Services Partnership. Coalition members are representatives of the affiliation group or the health and human service community sectors. Some members are representatives of both groups.

For the most part Coalition C appears to function as a formal system characterized by explicitly defined roles and relatively fixed procedures. Formal systems illustrate a greater dependence on financial resources which must be obtained from sources outside the coalition. For example, in another coalition that was studied, the youth advisory sector established a youth center. The financial resources that support the center mainly come from grants, and maintenance of programs is dependent on outside funding.

4. Educational partnerships

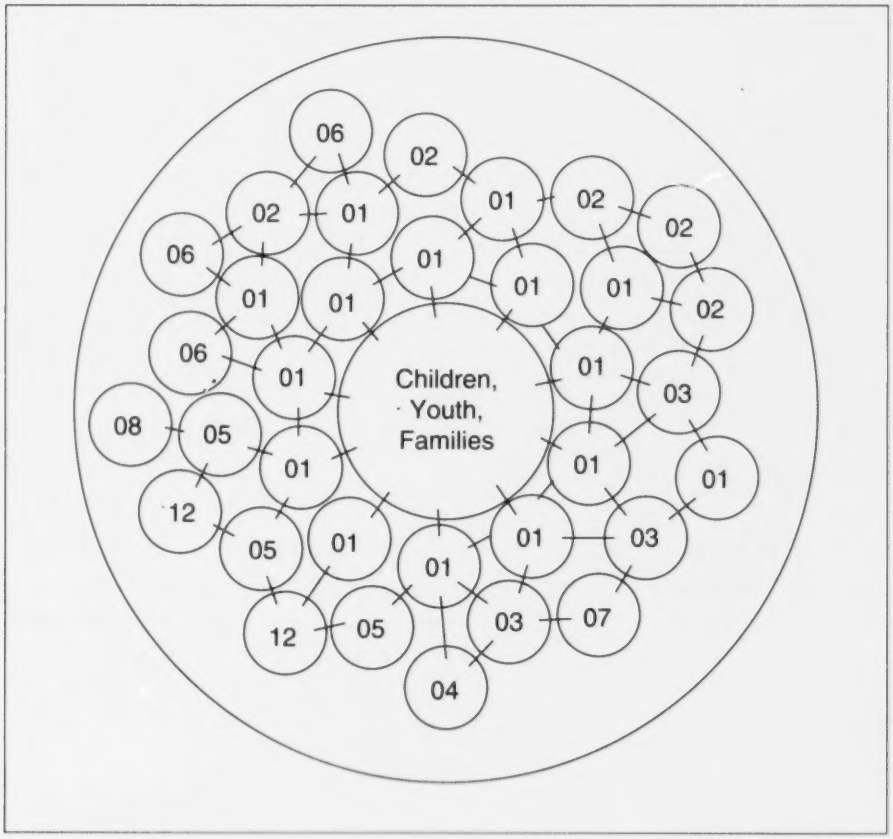
Coalition D was classified as an educational partnership. Educational partnerships are focused around schools and school-age children and youth. Coalition D was started in 1989 by concerned civic leaders. In 1990 the collaborative partnership received a major grant from the U. S. Department of Education and adopted its present structure as a Business Executive Round Table with three working panels. Currently it has over 200 volunteers on its working panels. Figure 9 illustrates the community sectors listed on coalition D's roster entitled "Community Partners."

The Round Table has as its primary goal to assist in the improvement of educational outcomes for young people. The planning team is made up of people who are working with companies and organizations represented on the Round Table. The team was charged to develop a system or format "for actually accomplishing things in the community, coming up with a purpose, vision, and value statement, as well as some objectives that could be accomplished in the first year." At a later date the team was to present its recommendations to the full Round Table membership and the community. It was also to create panels or work groups to carry out the recommendations. Three panels were created: an education panel, an employers' panel, and a resource panel. The panels, which are made up of 30 to 40 people, meet on a regular basis and the planning team meets once a month.

Projects identified as priorities are carried out in the school setting. The human services panel, for example, noticed that there was a need to provide support and help for youth in the schools where social workers are not easily accessible on a day-to-day basis. The panel developed a model that would allow university social work graduate students, under the supervision of community-based social workers, to provide services at an identified school site.

Although this coalition has an overall formal organizational structure and is dependent on grant funds, it also has characteristics of a semiformal system with respect to decision making by the planning committees and informal networking among the panels. The major focus of the panels is the provision of information as a resource to children, youth and their families, to improve their educational status.

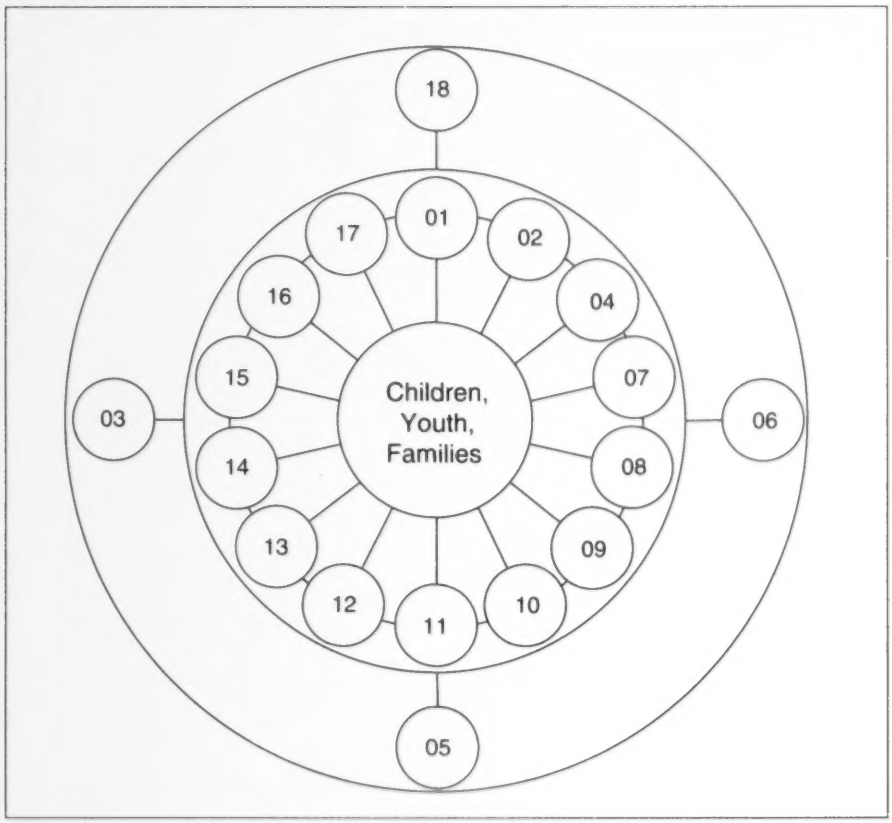
Figure 9: Stylized Example of Educational Partnership



5. Comprehensive community partnerships with citizen input

Coalitions E and F were classified as comprehensive community partnerships with active citizen participation (Figure 10). In Coalition E, seven representatives from youth-serving organizations attended a meeting organized by the Extension county office. Brainstorming resulted in plans to contact 60 people from various community sectors including law enforcement, schools, churches, business, financial institutions, city government, county government, parent teacher organizations, 4-H, senior citizens, youth, Department of Social Services, substance abuse services, service organizations, Scouts, health care providers and media. Representatives from the above community sectors were asked to become a part of a needs identification exercise for youth and families that reside

Figure 10: Stylized Example of Comprehensive Community Partnerships with Citizen Input



in the school district and to assist in setting priorities. They were told about attempts to start a community coalition and were invited to take part.

Six major areas of need were identified: a community center, expanding the school curriculum, substance abuse, creating awareness and priorities for family time, jobs and employment, and parental involvement with their children and the community. Four focus groups were formed that evening. As a result of this first meeting, the school board decided to conduct a survey asking students and their families what kinds of things they would like to see added to the curriculum. The school board is also cooperating with the community center focus group and has agreed to lease a school building to be used for a community center.

Every member of the coalition is a "volunteer," meaning that no one is paid for serving on the coalition; most have jobs for which administrators allow time to be spent on collaborative activities. A local business is providing space, at no cost, for monthly meetings. A local community service club provides refreshments. The coalition seeks funds for specific projects as needs are identified. Thus far, the only overhead expense required has been for postage.

According to interview participants, the most significant accomplishment of the coalition has been "creating the vehicle through which so many groups, agencies, and individuals are able to communicate. Perhaps most important is that the people of the community have a feeling or attitude that there is a trustworthy group of people working at finding solutions to critical needs. There is a new and positive attitude that something really is possible and the community and its people can move forward." Coalition E began as a very informal system of exchange with very few defined roles or rules. Actions arose from agreed-upon needs and group problem solving about issues as personal as family time and as concrete as the establishment of a teen center.

Coalition F has been in existence for almost two years and has over 200 volunteers working on various task forces dealing with recreation, afterschool programming, program planning, and citizen and youth involvement. This collaborative partnership consists of representatives from every sector listed in Table 6 (see page 24).

The coalition began with two people who met and discussed the possibility of bringing together youth workers and other concerned citizens to improve program services for children and to develop educational and prevention programs for youth at risk. They drafted a letter and mailed it to colleagues who they thought might be interested in working as a coalition to improve services and share resources. About 30 people attended the first meeting. They talked about the needs of local youth and

families and about the challenges of working together. Everyone agreed to meet on a regular basis. They explored various possibilities with respect to their goals and the structuring of their new partnership. A task force was formed to begin work on exploring possibilities for a town summit meeting and to discuss the benefits of that approach. A pre-town meeting was held to learn more about the process and to prepare for the summit meeting. A great deal of preparation went into that first summit meeting, including training of facilitators for focus groups, publicity and promotion, and fund raising to pay for refreshments and video rental.

One hundred people attended the first town summit meeting and evaluations of the meeting were very positive. A similar meeting for high school and junior high school students was held and approximately 90 teenagers and 20 adults attended the youth town meeting.

As an outcome of the town meetings and the focus groups, several primary issues were identified: the need for parenting education; a real concern about drug abuse prevention; recreational activities for youth; the lack of information about community events for youth and families; and where to go for services, assistance or information. A directory of services was developed and distributed by coalition members in the community. In addition, a telephone information hotline was also established. Because a large number of teens were involved in task force activities, there was much input from the teens. Teen demands resulted in expanded recreation and educational programs during the summer months.

Coalition F operated as an all-inclusive semiformal system with many informal interconnected networks. Citizens were empowered by the town summit meeting. All types of resources were exchanged within and among task force groups. Interview participants felt that the strength of the coalition's success in involving citizenry was the task force approach.

"Task forces are designed to have a task that can be accomplished within a reasonable amount of time, and when that task is accomplished and goals are met it can dissolve or it can select new tasks or new goals to achieve. . . Task forces have a particular task and go out and do it, accomplish it and complete it. . . . People don't have to make a lifetime commitment."

All collaborative efforts are volunteer. There are no paid staff members. "Any grant funding for special projects is then spun off to an existing agency rather than have the coalition as a body operate a program," explained interview participants.

Section

7

Challenges for Collaborations

Coalition building is a complex and, for some, a new adventure. It brings with it new challenges for human services and communities. The results of the survey suggested that stumbling blocks, difficulties and failures were also a part of some of the collaborative efforts. About half of the coalitions interviewed had started within the past year or two; therefore, this was a new experience for many individuals. Members of the coalitions reported various challenges and problems. Some have been successfully overcome, while others are still ongoing. The top three challenges or problems were: (1) inadequate funding; (2) resistance to involvement from a critical community sector; and (3) lack of involvement of parents.

Turf was another problem reported by several coalitions, and appeared in three forms: (1) territorial issues; (2) selection of leaders from various coalition members, that is, who should chair the coalition; and (3) conflicting personalities of the members. Turf, however, was not an ongoing problem, because most of the coalitions reported learning mechanisms to solve turf problems. Presumably those that don't solve this issue never get started or dissolve. Table 7 shows the number of people who thought that the major challenges or problems are still ongoing, and also shows the percentages of people who stated that the challenges or problems have been overcome.

Table 7. Percentage of People Who Said Challenges or Problems Are Still Ongoing Compared to the Percent of People Who Said the Problems or Challenges Had Been Overcome.

Challenge or Problem	Ongoing	Overcome
Inadequate Funding	79	5
Resistance to Involvement from a Community Sector	62	22
Lack of Involvement of Parents	56	11
Lack of Involvement of the Socially Disadvantaged	55	9
Lack of Involvement of Youth	33	17
Poor Planning of Coalition's Efforts	27	9
Lack of Support from Citizens	20	30
Lack of Support from Coalition Members' Home Agency/Organization	18	18
Lack of Direction of Coalition's Focus	15	39
Failure of Projects	14	42
Community Denial of Youth Problem	14	13
Lack of Documentation	13	75
Bureaucratic Red Tape	13	25
Turf Competition Between Agencies	10	55
Poor Networking with Outside Agencies/Organizations	9	46
Lack of Leadership or Struggle for Leadership	0	80
Distrust of Coalition Members' Motives	0	56
Poor Communication Among Members	0	50
Absence of Ethnic Diversity Among Coalition Members	0	68
A Member Who Blocks Progress or Change	0	50
Coalition Activities Reach a Plateau	0	42
Conflict Among Coalition Members	0	50
Burnout or Unrealistic Demands on Members	0	50

Section 7

Most of the collaborative-effort interviews started with a group of individuals from organizations or agencies who initiated the coalitions. They were responsible for organizing meetings, seeking resources and setting up communication channels. Building a sense of common goals is essential in coalition building. Unity, as discussed earlier, was considered by the majority of coalitions interviewed to contribute greatly to the success of coalitions. Without a common goal, unity is difficult to achieve. Coalition members reported the need to have an open mind to different views, to have trust in other members, and to have a personal commitment to the coalition. "On one goal we could agree, the care and well-being of all our children."

A collaborative effort needs resources and members from different agencies to function effectively. The resources could include staff, equipment, facilities, information, services and finance. Every party involved must be willing to give up something for the benefits of a coalition. Likewise a coalition is strengthened if it provides something useful to an individual or agency that it cannot receive on its own.

1. Funding

Funding was considered necessary by most of the coalitions interviewed. Most reported that they needed support in the area of grant writing. The question did arise, however, as to how much funding was enough. It was feared by some coalitions that too much emphasis on funding could reduce the motivation and volunteerism of coalition members and threaten the autonomy of the coalition. While it was generally acknowledged that funding was necessary to carry out programs, respondents cautioned that funding is a means, not an end.

2. Needs assessments

The process and tools used in identifying needs varied from surveys to informal discussion. Most used a combination of tools. They included mailed surveys, consultation with the target audience, interviews, professional opinions, existing data, town meetings, information provided by agencies, grant writing, family and services worker interactions and expertise. The use of these methods was quite evenly distributed among the coalitions. However, the survey method appeared to be used most frequently, but with no evidence as to its effectiveness. One coalition needs assessment was an empowerment process utilizing focus groups, town meetings and forums.

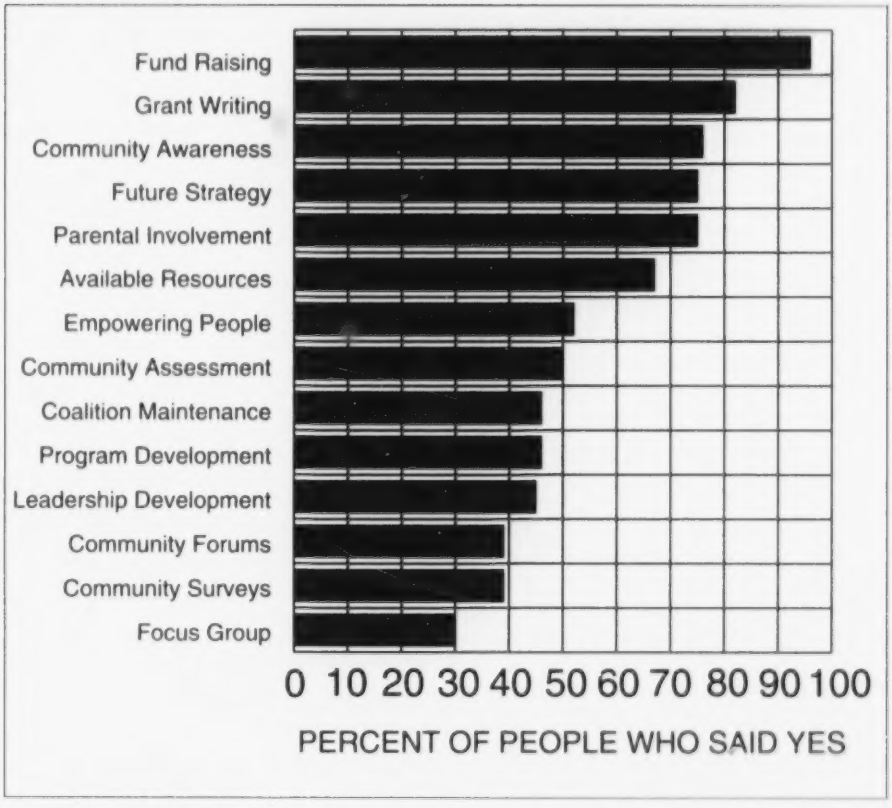
Section 7

Identified Needs of Coalitions

1. Skills needed by coalition members

According to the coalitions, fund raising and grant writing were the most needed types of support, followed by community awareness of problems, planning a future strategy and parental involvement.

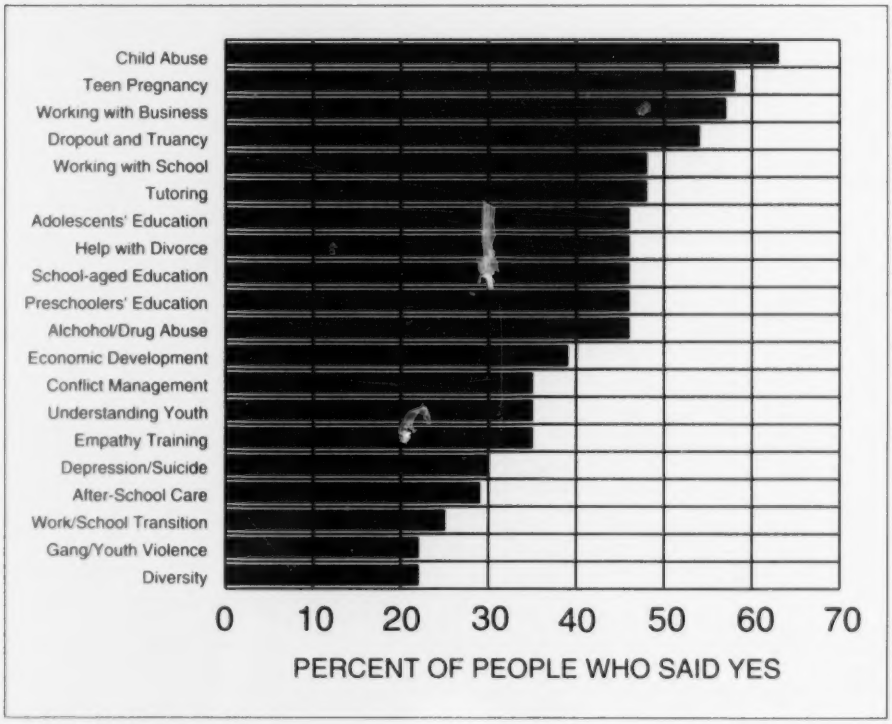
Figure 11: Skills Needed by Coalitions (checklists by respondents).



2. Programming support needed by the coalitions

Approximately half of the coalitions requested programming support needed to prevent child abuse, teen pregnancy, high school dropouts and truancy, and alcohol and drug abuse. Assistance was requested in working with businesses and schools. Tutoring and help with all stages of education were also important programming areas.

Figure 12. Programming Supports Needed by Coalitions (checklist by respondents).



Common Elements Among Collaborations

The in-depth interviews provided detailed information about the common and unique elements of coalitions that were effective in their communities. The results of the qualitative data analysis suggest that numerous common elements exist across a majority of the coalitions interviewed for this project. However, unique elements were also found to contribute to the effectiveness of coalitions, and will be discussed later. The common elements uncovered in this study suggested that there is a process involved when building a coalition.

More than half the coalitions attributed part of their effectiveness in the community to strong leadership within their coalitions. In addition, unity and communication were also found to be important common elements in the overall effectiveness of the coalitions.

1. Common Element 1: Leadership

Leadership was identified as an important element in a coalition's development and maintenance and in facilitating its effectiveness. Leadership qualities such as personal commitment, enjoyable involvement and determination to achieve the goals and objectives, stood out as vitally important to the development and operation of a collaborative effort.

Although qualities and styles of leadership may vary, certain traits of leadership were found to be predominant or common among effective coalitions. Successful leaders have strong determination, possess the ability to seek resources, are optimistic, and know how to recruit the right people. The ability to seek resources was ranked the most important quality of a leader. The resources included human resources, financial resources, and political support. Identification of these resources, and being able to communicate effectively and gain support from them, was considered the major task of coalition leadership.

Certainly recruiting and involving the right people in a collaborative effort are important abilities of a strong leader; however, the right person to recruit from an organization, agency or community is not always the head of that organization, agency or community. As one coalition member said, "The person in the trenches, doing the work, sometimes is the best candidate." Another coalition member also pointed out that "The strength for the connection is contingent upon the staff member's personality and commitment rather than the agency's commitment." However, support from administration is imperative if a task is to be carried out effectively and time from work allocated. Moreover, members of the community

must take leadership in a coalition if it is going to be effective within that community. Maintaining a balance between people with control over resources and those who are engaged in the actual direct services is a significant indicator of effective leadership.

2. Common Element 2: Unity

Unity refers to the strong sense of solidarity and togetherness that coalition members feel toward one another, and was assessed by over half of the coalitions as being an integral part of their effectiveness. By working together, coalition members deterred conflict and avoided duplication of services. Some coalitions used the word "camaraderie" to describe the feeling among coalition members.

3. Common Element 3: Communication

Effective communication, through informal means, was another common element suggested by more than half of the coalitions as important to their functioning. Networking, defined as an informal way of sharing information among coalition members, provided a sense of closeness in sharing information. Networking was cited directly as the major means of communication among coalition members.

4. Common Element 4: Participation by citizens and informal organizations

The involvement of religious institutions and citizen volunteers was found to be a common element among many of the coalitions. Coalitions attributed much of their operational effectiveness to the involvement of citizen volunteers and, in particular, to religious institutions. Numerous stories were told about people volunteering to participate in the coalitions or to donate resources to the coalitions. Moreover, heavy involvement of citizen volunteers demonstrates the vitality of mobilization of the local community by these community-based coalitions.

5 Common Element 5: Successful accomplishments

Another common element was that each coalition had accomplished something that it was particularly proud of, either in the process of building the coalition or fulfilling its tasks. These accomplishments were labeled effective elements. The building of a coalition in itself was considered to be a great accomplishment by members, as well as the many programs and services in which they were involved. Major programs and services are listed here.

Programs and Services Provided by Coalitions.	
1.	Prevention programs: alcohol, drug, teen pregnancy, crime
2.	Clearinghouse of information: videos, books, documents, technical assistance, telephone directory for youths to call for various services
3.	Sponsors for various events: conferences, speakers, training workshops
4.	Family counseling: health, parenting, child care, home economics, household management
5.	Arts and recreational activities: arts network, dancing, music writing, park recreations, sports nights
6.	Educational programs: tutorial programs for elementary and high school students, campaigning for community awareness of youth problems, storytelling
7.	Workshops for: computer training, math and science competence for high school students, leadership training
8.	Coordination of services: networking among various agencies to avoid duplicated services
9.	Health programs: child immunization, family health planning
10.	Job placement programs: part-time and full-time job placement assistance

6. Common Element 6: Locality

"Locality" was another important element found in many of the coalitions. Locality describes the sense of connectedness to the people served and commitment to the community. For example, one of the interviewees said, "The coalition has to be close to the very area and people it serves." Many coalitions suggested that the target group the coalition serves has the final say in defining its own problem. As members of one coalition suggested, "It is important to use local folks to define local kinds of problems." A member of an equally effective coalition on behalf of youth commented that the coalition's final decision "rests with the teens."

Locality also means that a coalition must establish itself as an authority on the issues or topics it is attempting to address. In one coalition member's experience, "The main and significant achievement of the coalition is in that it has established a visible, working organization that appeals to the youth in the community. The coalition has succeeded to attract the youth to participate in its educational projects." Dluhy (1990) speaks of the same issue when he says that the most important task for any coalition is to demonstrate to the larger community that it is the most legitimate group in the community that is capable of resolving an issue or problem.

7. Common Element 7: Traits and characteristics of coalition members

Traits of coalition members contributing to the effectiveness of the coalition are: (1) openmindedness; (2) trust; (3) enjoyable involvement; (4) personal commitment; and (5) willingness to volunteer. Although a coalition involves participating organizations and agencies, the makeup of a coalition, in most cases, consists of specific individuals or groups of individuals coming from organizations, agencies and the community. The effectiveness of a coalition depends more upon the quality, commitment and personality of the members than upon the organizations or agencies they may represent.

Volunteerism, a willingness to work beyond one's normal duties, is a common trait among coalition members. For example, one coalition reported that 27 members out of one agency supported the coalition through volunteer services. Volunteerism is the result of many factors.

Personal interest and enjoyment of the projects was reported as contributing to the sustained involvement and interest of the members.

Since people involved in a coalition are diverse, a coalition member must have an open mind and a willingness to listen, to understand and to cooperate. Coalitions with members possessing these qualities reported few turf problems. Having an open mind, however, is not sufficient. Trust, as pointed out by many coalition members, lays the foundation for cooperation and consensus.

Section 9

Unique Elements of Collaborations

This section of the report will focus on the unique aspects of the in-depth interviews with coalition members. Unique elements are defined as those features of a particular coalition that were not reported by other coalitions. These unique features may not be in congruence with literature, but may possibly shed new light on the development and functioning of coalitions.

1. Unique element 1: Autonomy-funding relationship

In most situations, outside funding is looked upon favorably and even thought of as essential to a coalition's effectiveness. However, one coalition formed on behalf of youth at risk has a different philosophy on outside funding. The view held is that reliance on major outside grants for funding to continue on a year-to-year basis would reduce volunteer motivation, and would make the program continuance dependent on outside money. Thus, if the money runs out the program dies, which is true even when the program is intended to be a long-term and sustainable one. The coalition does not want to downplay the importance of outside funding. Rather, it asserts that funding should be sought in such a way that it does not conflict with the goals and interests of the coalition. For example, no funds were sought by the coalition, but the members shared information about grant resources with the organizations within the collaboration.

A related concept in funding is the autonomy and self-containment of the coalition. In one county, the coalition turned down a generous offer for continual funding support from a big organization because members feared they would lose their autonomy and become an affiliated institution. Another county also reported that no funding help was needed because the coalition was built in such a way that it could be self-contained. However, many communities have so few resources that self maintenance of the most basic functions is improbable if not impossible. In these cases, ongoing sponsorship for basic needs provides confidence and support.

2. Unique element 2: Use of local media

The effect of the mass media on the public has long been well recognized. In business, intentional use of the mass media such as advertising is considered vital to success. However, in human services, intentional use

of mass media to help to achieve participation in the formation of goals and objectives is not a common practice. By actively seeking out participation and input, human services organizations and collaborative efforts could enable citizens to take ownership of their communities.

One of the coalitions interviewed attributed some of its effectiveness to the publicity and support the coalition received from the local media. For instance, two town meetings the coalition held received front-page coverage by the local newspaper, giving the coalition plenty of advance publicity and follow-up. In one coalition member's words, the local newspaper and radio station "played an important role in alerting the community to the goals and efforts of the coalition to work cooperatively and collaboratively in solving problems of youth." The attention the coalition received from mass media did increase the awareness among citizens, youth and families that something could be done to improve their community and provide supportive conditions for youth and families. The publicity created by the local media established the authority and legitimacy of the coalition to work for the target groups it intended to serve. It seems likely that other collaborative efforts described in this research report had used media efforts and may have failed to report it or they did not design intentional use of media to assess in their accomplishments.

3. Unique Element 3: Community problem definition

In considering effective elements, it has been observed that using the targeted audience as a resource to define its own problems is fundamental to conducting a needs assessment and building a successful coalition. People are aware of their own needs and problems. Moreover, using a community to define its own problems can empower and motivate the members of that community to act.

For example, a Native American coalition found that its leadership needed to come from within. A sense of mission and pride of leadership was one of the most valuable assets in the coalition. This was their land, their problem and their future. In their opinion, the assistance and the programs that came from outside the community and from outside agencies were doomed to failure. This coalition's strong statement demonstrates the fact that mobilization of local people to attack their own problems can be crucial in building coalitions.

Section

10

Implications for Community Collaborations

Coalitions or collaborative efforts are one aspect of comprehensive programming in the prevention of the problems facing our children, youth and families. This study was an initial attempt to document and understand collaborative efforts as they exist in communities. Common and unique elements associated with effective collaborative efforts were outlined. Programming supports and skills needed by the communities were identified. Implications of these findings for coalition development and maintenance are described in this section.

Ten Major Implications For Community Collaborations.
1. Diversity
2. Open Communication and Trust
3. Early Success
4. Leadership
5. Planning
6. Needs Assessment or Community Scan
7. Schools
8. Adults and Youth Working Together
9. A coalition on behalf of children, youth and families is NOT the same as an economic development coalition.
10. Prevention

1. Diversity

As microcosms of the community, community-based coalitions are diverse. Their membership is comprised of a variety of people representing cultural, ethnic and economic diversity. Differences in values naturally follow and it is essential to the coalition's success that members respect each other's uniqueness. A variety of organizations are usually represented in a community-based collaborative effort. Examples included United Way, University Extension, religious institutions and youth service organizations. Local businesses and schools are also important players in the coalition process. Moreover, the children, youth and families that the coalition is attempting to serve need to be involved if a coalition is to increase the effectiveness of programs. People without children are also essential resources that enable a coalition to create a caring community. A word of caution: when beginning planning groups are too large, they may

become unmanageable. The planning group can include a limited number in initiating the coalition process (i.e., key administrators from the schools, well respected people from the community, different representatives from organizations), but with ongoing mechanisms to involve all aspects of the community's social and economic life.

2. Open communication and trust

Open communication and trust among members are critical for a coalition's effectiveness. For some communities the coalition is comprised of adults who grew up in that community together and never left. If the patterns of communication are open and full of trust, the basic groundwork has been laid. If communication patterns are closed and there is lack of trust, the task of building a coalition will be difficult until positive relationships can be established. In more mobile communities (i.e., metropolitan areas) open communication and trust are not easily established because people do not know each other. Thus, these skills need to be developed and incorporated in the coalition process through such activities as informal social gatherings.

Turf issues can be a major barrier to creating trust. It is important that they be openly discussed early in the collaboration process. If at any time during the collaborative process a turf issue surfaces, it is best to address it immediately, otherwise the group may become divided. Since coalitions are comprised of diverse people who do think in territorial ways, it is important to create a shared vision. Participants in the coalition must come to a consensus around the definition of the need or issue they wish to deal with, and develop a mission statement. This mission should provide direction in the collaborative effort's decisions and programs.

3. Early success

Whether a coalition succeeds or fails may depend in part on what program or activity it carries out first. A coalition's first community program or activity, which usually takes no more than six months to plan, can significantly increase the coalition members' morale and increase probability of success. An appropriate activity would increase the community's awareness of the collaboration and its mission. A town meeting is one way a collaborative effort can begin to assess the needs of the community's children, youth and families, and also allow the coalition to establish itself in the community and begin to empower the people in the process. Creating a directory of services for children, youth and families is another way that a coalition can establish itself in the

community and its organizations. A coalition might present to different organizations and businesses the existing statistics about children, youth and families in that community, and solicit support for the shared vision.

4. Leadership

Many collaborative efforts begin with one, two or three persons. From these few people, leadership emerges. As the collaboration grows and membership increases, it is important that each member feel a sense of responsibility for the success of the coalition. In addition, advice can be sought from other communities which have had previous experience in coalition building. Changing leadership (i.e., rotating chairs or co-chairs) ensures that a few individuals are not viewed as controlling or overburdened with responsibility. In addition, change in leadership can be established in the bylaws of a collaborative effort to make the transition of leadership as smooth as possible.

The coalition members identified the following characteristics and skills that effective coalition leaders might possess (these characteristics are consistent with those identified by The National Assembly of National Voluntary Health and Social Welfare Organizations, 1991).

Characteristics and Skills of Effective Coalition Leaders	
1.	Ability to guide the group toward the collaboration goal, while seeking to include and explore all points of view;
2.	Comfort with consensus building and small group process;
3.	Respect in the community and knowledge about the issues the collaboration will address;
4.	Skill to negotiate turf issues;
5.	Belief in the process of collaboration;
6.	Knowledge about the community and organizations in the community;
7.	Skill and persuasiveness in oral and written communication; and
8.	Time to commit to leadership.

5. Planning

"Quality planning is the best insurance for quality implementation" (Gardner, 1992). As a coalition grows, it may be more efficient to break it down into subcommittees. The function of a subcommittee is to plan a new program/activity. Thoroughly planning a program requires that the right players be involved in the planning process. Thus, the subcommittees may need to recruit certain key people for a program they wish to start. Of course, the subcommittee should include representatives of the people who are going to be affected by the program, to ensure its value with the particular audience it is trying to serve. All possible problems and situations that may be related to that program must be thoroughly thought out and plans of action must be documented. However, a planning committee must not get so wrapped up in the planning that it loses sight of the goal of the program and the general mission of the collaboration. Comprehensive communitywide prevention programs seem to be most effective. Programs are to be based on the history of a community, the particular needs of that community, and its existing service systems.

6. Needs assessment or community scan

A successful coalition will address the particular needs of the community in which it wishes to operate. Moreover, continual updating of its knowledge about the community is necessary, because the community and families requiring services may change over time. Assessing what the community already has in terms of programs and services is a good starting point for a coalition beginning to evaluate the needs of its community. For example, some coalitions in our study created a directory of the organizations that offered services to children, youth and families. Creating a directory enables a coalition to discover what programs and services are available and what are not available. In addition, a coalition probably can increase its membership from these newly discovered organizations. After assessing what already exists, a coalition can continue into the next phase of a community scan. A community scan can be accomplished through a town summit, focus groups, youth summit, survey, etc. A community scan is an activity that empowers the community to take ownership of the self-identified problems. This community scan also establishes the collaborative effort as an authority and a vehicle through which the community can mobilize its power and resources.

7. The role of schools

Schools were identified through the survey as major participants in community collaborations. However, in the in-depth interviews, schools were infrequently mentioned as taking leadership roles. On the surface the schools would seem to be the core of the community in relation to children and youth, but this is true only if the majority of the children attend the schools in the community in which they live. Exceptions would be children bused out of their communities, children attending private schools not in the community, and children who have dropped out of schools. Furthermore, primary consideration should be given to reaching the families of children at the prenatal, infant and preschool ages.

Certainly schools and the educational system are absolutely necessary to a collaborative effort that is attempting to create successful comprehensive prevention programs. They need to be key members, but not necessarily the sector from which the organizing leadership must come. In fact a primary audience for collaborative efforts may be those children, youth and parents that feel alienated by the educational system. Leadership from other organizations could support the schools and community.

8. Adults and youth working together

Youth are a valuable resource, yet they are often overlooked or dismissed by adults as being too immature. Community-based collaborations involving both youth and adults are bridging generational relationships and building leadership for the future. Thus, adults involved in community collaboration need to be taught how to work with adolescents, and youth need to feel comfortable about speaking up in an adult dominated group. Mutual respect of all members' opinions is necessary for the coalition's success.

9. A coalition on behalf of children, youth and families is NOT the same as an economic development coalition

A coalition focusing upon human development has many similarities to an economic development coalition; the importance of strong leadership, group dynamics, and shared vision are a few examples. Both require economic support and involvement of the economic community but human development collaborations have some very different foci.

Foci Of Human Development Collaborations.
1. Success with children and families requires long-term commitment, such as 10 to 20 years.
2. The "products," i.e., children, youth and families, are active participants in the process and become "moving targets" with continual change.
3. Relationships, values, causes and effects are extremely complex and vary widely within individual families and communities.
4. Families are the most powerful and economical units for making and keeping human beings humans (Bronfenbrenner, 1983), but at the same time, as very small social units, are fragile and impacted by changes in social and economic trends. Supportive communities are essential to create support systems that dramatically reduce this potential volatility.
5. The basis for working for children, youth and families is viewed as altruistic, whereas economic development is viewed as self-interest. Although we argue the needs of children can be considered human capital development with clear economic components, these outcomes are less apparent. Prevention of negative outcomes is less visible, and therefore it is more difficult to attract financial support..

10. Prevention

The evidence is clear and well-documented: prevention programs enhance the quality of life for youth and their families and ultimately save money. However, ineffective prevention programs are fragmented, meager, and uncoordinated; in contrast, successful prevention programs are intensive, comprehensive, and flexible (Schorr, 1988). Furthermore, comprehensive prevention programs which address multiple risk factors and their antecedents have proven to be far more effective than single focused prevention programs (Bogenschneider, Small, & Riley, 1990; Dryfoos, 1990; Forgotten Half, 1988; Schorr, 1988). Successful prevention programs are adaptable to their clients' cultures, diversity and lifestyles as well as individual diversity. For example, prevention programs designed to meet the needs of youth in a specific state may not address the special

needs of all youth sectors (e.g.,inner city youth and youth in rural areas, African-American youth and Hispanic youth, or even the youth in a neighboring community). Thus, what is needed to enhance the quality of life for children, youth and families are comprehensive prevention programs developed within each community, based on the perceived and observed needs of its children, youth and families. Listed below are 11 components of successful prevention programs. A single program cannot be expected to contain all these components, but it should contain a majority of these components if it is to be successful.

Common Components of Successful Prevention Programs (Dryfoos, 1990):
1. Intensive Individualized Attention
2. Communitywide Multi-agency Collaborative Approaches
3. Early Identification of Problems and Intervention
4. Locus in School
5. Administration of School Programs by Agencies Outside of Schools
6. Location of Programs Outside of Schools
7. Arrangements for Training
8. Social Skills Training
9. Engagement of Peers in Interventions
10. Involvement of Parents
11. Link to the World of Work

One Summary Implication Nearly all reports, this one included, recommend collaboration. It is our observation that this is easily "said," but not easily "done." Successful collaborations are hard work, often time consuming, and require one to put the needs of children, youth and families above the needs of institutions. Communities able to accomplish this are making wise investments in the present and the future. To these efforts in Michigan and elsewhere and to the people behind them, we give our deepest respect and support.

Section 11

Current Status and Future Outlook

This exploratory study was established to identify, document and evaluate a wide range of collaborative efforts on behalf of Michigan's children, youth and families. It is part of a project carried out at the Institute for Children, Youth, and Families, funded by the Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station. This project emphasizes the interaction, interdependency and interconnection between research and outreach, with both being viewed as equal components. Thus, theories and models of community collaborations have been modified based upon this action research in communities and the situations facing communities.

From this exploratory study, a large amount of information was gleaned about how coalitions develop and maintain themselves and, more importantly, a network of contacts was established to interact and support community-based initiatives on behalf of children, youth and families. The involvement of many different agencies and citizens in this effort has opened up windows of opportunity whereby we can learn from each other's efforts. The need for technical assistance from many areas of the university has been identified; however, the need for recognition from the academic and policy arenas has also been identified by this exploratory project. Some tools were and are being developed as a part of this research project.

1. Videotape

An educational video was developed to document the early stages of community-based collaborative effort. Based in an urban setting, this coalition's focus is directed toward issues of youth at risk. The video progresses through the coalition's needs assessment process. In addition, the video presents four examples of projects started by the coalition to address the issues brought forth by the needs assessment.

2. Community-based training

Coalition training within communities has also been implemented and a training program is being developed, piloted and refined. Moreover, this project is providing unique training to community teams that consist of adults and adolescents. These training sessions are being conducted as a cooperative effort between 4-H Youth Programs, the Department of Family and Child Ecology, and the Institute for Children, Youth, and Families.

3. Second wave of data collection

Follow-up interviews are being conducted with the coalitions previously interviewed, to track over time whether differences exist in the maintenance and format of various types of collaborative efforts. Questionnaires and received information will be added to the computerized database. Systematic collection updating the existence (or demise) of coalitions will be conducted as time permits.

4. Community-based profile of Michigan youth

The project will be collaborating with Search Institute (Minneapolis, Minn.), RespecTeen, and Michigan communities, to conduct statewide community-based youth profile. The assessment program will be a representative sample of the state, and will provide an indication of how "healthy" our communities are in terms of providing support for children, youth and families. In addition, access to indicators of the status of children, youth and families on a county level is available in the Michigan *Kids Count Data Book*.

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